

REMARKS

Claim 1 is amended to remove reference numerals. Claims 1 and 2 are amended to remove the alternative narrower limitation or range, thereby overcoming the rejection of those claims under 35 U.S.C. § 112, and new Claims 9 and 10 are added to define the narrower limitations removed from their respective parent claims. Claim 1 also is amended to change "consist of" to --comprising-- with respect to the at least two flat flex cables, and to recite that the sealing material consists substantially of a similar material as the insulating material of the FFCs. Lastly, Claims 8, 11, and 12 are added to further define novel subject matter over the applied art.

Claims 1, 2, and 8-12 remain for consideration in this application. Claims 3-7 are directed to non-elected inventions and are withdrawn from further consideration in this application.

Claims 1 and 2 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite. As mentioned above, those claims are amended in such a way that the bases for the indefiniteness rejections are removed.

Claims 1 and 2 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102 as anticipated by *Goericke* (DE 3333709). The rejection asserts that *Goericke* discloses insulation of electrical connections of at least two flat cables (1 and 2), and otherwise anticipates the limitations of the rejected claims. The Applicant respectfully traverses this rejection.

The undersigned has obtained an English abstract of *Goericke*. A courtesy copy of that translation is enclosed for the convenience of the Examiner.

Goericke differs from the present invention in a significant manner. That reference deals with the necessity to mount a branch line to an FFC with the help of a

short intermediate branch, which runs in a direction out of the plane of the FFC. This branch line is the so-called "Abgriff" 2 in *Goericke*. The enclosed abstract identifies Abriff 2 as a "pick-off" which consists of a stripline section whose conductors 7 at one end are welded to the conductors 6 of the FFC 1. At the free end of the pick-off 2, the conductors 7 project out of the pick-off as their conductors. In an application of *Goericke's* device, those free ends would terminate in a connector (not shown in *Goericke*) for connecting the pick-off to the *actual* branch line.

Accordingly, *Goericke* does *not* disclose two flat flex cables joined with one another, wherein the exposed strip conductors of different FFCs are joined with one another. That reference shows only a single FFC 1, to which the conductors at one end of the pick-off stub 2 are joined. Accordingly, the rejection of Claims 1 and 2 as anticipated by *Goericke* errs in asserting that reference discloses connection of at least two flat cables as required by the claims, and for that reason the reference does not anticipate Claims 1 and 2.

Claim 2 characterizes the thickness of the sealing material in the area of the matrix as between one-fifth and threefold the thickness of the insulating material of the FFC. Although the rejection asserts that *Goericke* discloses sealing material meeting that range limitation, the Applicant does not find that anticipating disclosure in the reference. Looking at Fig. 2 as the rejection mentions, the Applicant first notes that patent drawings generally are not considered as being to scale. Nonetheless, the lower portion of the insulating body 3 in that figure appears at most approximately one-half the thickness of the insulating material 8 covering the FFC 1. In any case, it cannot be said with accuracy that Fig. 2 of *Goericke* shows a lower portion of the insulating body 3 that is only one-

fifth the thickness of the insulating material 8 for the FFC. For this additional reason, the reference fails to anticipate Claim 2.

Claims 9 and 10 incorporate the narrower limitations removed from Claim 1, and those dependent claims are considered patentable for the reasons stated above with respect to their parents.

Further considering Claim 2, that claim defines the thickness of the sealing material in the area of the matrix as between half and twice the thickness of the insulating material of the FFC. The uppermost portion of the insulating body 3 shown in Fig. 2 of *Goericke* measures approximately 7mm, while the thickness of the FFC insulation 8 is about 2mm. That upper thickness of the insulating body 3 thus is more than three times the thickness of the insulating material of the FFC, assuming Fig. 2 is drawn to scale. Accordingly, *Goericke* fails to anticipate Claim 10 for that additional reason.

Claim 9 depends from Claim 1 and recites that the at least two FFCs lie in planes that are parallel to each other. The pick-off stub 2 of *Goericke* joins the single FFC 1 at an acute angle. Moreover, the pick-off stub cannot be parallel, because the connection points 10 (at Fig. 3 of *Goericke*) would have a staggered position along the axis of the FFC1, making it impossible for the pick-off to branch off in a direction leaving the plane of the FFC 1 as disclosed in the reference. Accordingly, new Claim 8 is novel over *Goericke* for that additional reason.

New Claim 11 depends from Claim 1 and adds that the exposed strip conductors of the different FFCs are joined with one another intermediate the ends of the different FFCs. This limitation further distinguishes over *Goericke*. In addition to having only a

single FFC 1, that reference shows one end of the pick-off 2 being connected to the conductors of the FFC. Claim 11 thus is novel over *Goericke*.

New Claim 12 depends from Claim 11 and adds that the different FFCs lie in planes that are parallel to each other. As mentioned above, a coplanar arrangement of the FFC 1 with the pick-off 2, according to *Goericke*, would not be possible. Claim 12 thus defines novelty over *Goericke* for that additional reason.

The foregoing is submitted as a complete response to the Office Action identified above. This application should now be in condition for allowance, and the Applicant solicits a notice to that effect.

Respectfully submitted,

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Stripline having at least one pick-off

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Abstract of DE3333709

A stripline (1) is specified which, in its course, has at least one pick-off (2) which is constructed as a web which projects out sideways. The pick-off (2) consists of a stripline section whose conductors (7) are, for example, welded to the conductors (6) of the stripline (1). At the free end of the pick-off (2), the conductors (7) of the same project out of the insulation (9) as bare conductors. The connecting point (10) between the conductors (7) of the pick-off (2) and the conductors (6) of the stripline (1) is covered in a moisture-proof manner by means of an insulating body (3).